

# TELIDON REPORTS

No. 5 May 1981



Government of Canada  
Department of Communications

Gouvernement du Canada  
Ministère des Communications

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## TIME TO START TELETEXT SERVICE

Time Inc. of New York will use Telidon in the first nationwide, multi-channel teletext service for home cable subscribers in the U.S.

The publishing company, which also has major holdings in the U.S. communications industry, says initial trials of the service will begin late this year.

The new teletext service, as yet unnamed, will begin operating on one of the cable systems owned by American Television and Communications Corporation (ATC), a Time Inc. subsidiary with some 1.5 million cable subscribers. Time also owns Home Box Office, which serves about 4.5 million cable users.

Time's teletext service, like Home Box Office, will be distributed by satellite with a full transponder dedicated to the

multi-channel service. Multi-channel capacity will vastly expand the amount and diversity of transmittable material, which will be drawn from Time Inc.'s own editorial resources and from national and local newspapers and other information sources.

Commenting on the choice of Canadian technology, Sean McCarthy, Director of the Time Inc. Video Group Development Unit, said: "After reviewing all the competing teletext technologies, we determined that Telidon is the most desirable because it allows the greatest degree of editorial flexibility. Its capacity to produce graphics exceeds the current capabilities of other teletext formats."

Time Inc. publishes Time, Life, Sports Illustrated, People, Money, and Fortune magazines as well as The Washington Star and Time-Life Books.

The Time teletext service will offer cable subscribers round-the-clock, multi-channel programming seven days a week. McCarthy said the trial will explore the possibility of funding the service through a combination of advertising and subscription revenues.

In addition to launching its own teletext service, Time Inc. says it will participate actively in other American-based experiments using different technology. The company said it will also take part in a Canadian videotex trial which is expected to be

La version française de ce bulletin peut être obtenue auprès de TELIDON du MDC, pièce 2000, Tour Journal Sud, 300, rue Slater, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0C8. (613) 996-4243

This newsletter is available upon request from TELIDON, Room 2000, Journal Tower South, 300 Slater Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0C8. (613) 996-4243



announced in Toronto later this year.  
For more information about the Time  
Telidon project, contact: Michael  
Luftman, Time Inc. Video Group  
Information Office, Time and Life  
Building, Rockefeller Centre, N.Y.,  
N.Y., 10020. U.S.A. (212) 841-2515.

#### TIMES MIRROR CHOOSES TELIDON

The Times Mirror Corporation will purchase a 200-terminal Telidon videotex system for a field trial in Los Angeles and Orange counties.

Terminals will be placed in private homes and the system will operate simultaneously over telephone and two-way cable networks. The trial phase will offer data retrieval as well as transaction services. A Digital Equipment Corp. VAX 11/780 will be used as host computer.

Telidon Videotex Systems Inc., a subsidiary created by Infomart of Canada to sell Telidon systems in the U.S., will supply Times Mirror with a complete turnkey (ready to run) system under an initial contract worth more than \$1 million.

Information providers will include The Los Angeles Times and other publishing subsidiaries of the Times Mirror group. The trial begins late in 1981.

Larry T. Pfister, U.S. Sales Vice President for Telidon Videotex Systems, said the Times Mirror purchase is "a first for us in the United States, and a very big first."

"While the FCC may establish the standard for teletext because it is a broadcast system, the standards for

videotex will ultimately be decided in the marketplace," Pfister said. "It is very important to Telidon and Infomart to win the approval of Times Mirror, one of the world's largest communications companies with headquarters in the second largest television market in the U.S." For more information about the Times Mirror trial, contact: L.T. Pfister, Telidon Videotex Systems, Suite 400, Three Landmark Square, Stamford, CT 06901, (203) 965-1981.

#### BELL WILL TEST "SMART" NETWORK

An intelligent switching network designed to serve both alphanumeric and Telidon alphageometric data formats will be tested by Bell Canada in a 400-terminal field trial in 1982. INET (pronounced "eye-net") will focus on gateway and networking functions that will allow terminal users to access remote data services in either the conventional alphanumeric mode used by many existing business computers or the alphageometric Telidon format used in videotex systems. The goal is to build links between existing terminals and data bases and the new Telidon systems.

The Bell Computer Communications Group, which is designing the system, envisages a network which will allow users of either type of terminal to call up the INET directory, browse through the available services in the appropriate format, and select the desired information. Such a system would be particularly useful to owners of dual capacity terminals such as those being produced by Electrohome for business use.



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INET would allow users of such terminals to access remote data services in either format. Trial organizers hope the system will allow Telidon data bases across Canada to be accessed through a common network. Terminal users would be able to access a number of data bases with a single call rather than dialing up each data base individually and logging off between searches.

The INET system will be tested in conjunction with a business videotex trial starting in mid-1982. The trial will involve 200 Telidon-type terminals with added business features including capacity for alphanumeric display and 200 ASC II terminals which will be provided by businesses participating in the project. The trial will be funded entirely by Bell Canada. Unlike the Bell Vista Telidon trial, which relies primarily on local telephone networks, INET will make use of Bell's Datapac network. Organizers hope the intelligent switching functions of INET will make Datapac a more "user friendly" service.

The Bell Vista trial, the largest Telidon trial to date, will begin preliminary operations in Toronto in May. The Department of Communications and Bell Canada signed a turnover agreement for Telidon software in November and a joint team of Bell and DOC researchers began working closely together December 1 on the installation and testing of the host computer system. The Vista trial will use 491 user terminals and 28 information provider terminals. Most terminals will be located in private homes in Toronto and Quebec City.

For more information about Vista,  
contact: G.A. Johnson, Bell Canada,  
5th floor, 25 Eddy St., Hull, Que., J8Y  
6N4 (819) 776-7647.

For more information about INET, contact  
Gwen Edwards, Room 900, 160 Elgin St.,  
Ottawa, Ont., K1G 3J4, (613) 239-4301.

#### STATISTICS CANADA AND TELIDON

Pages prepared by the Statistics Canada Telidon task force are beginning to appear on a number of field trial data bases and as many as 250 pages should be in circulation by June, reports Andy Billingsley, field trial liaison officer for StatsCan.

The Statistics Canada data base will include nine information packages of statistics, graphics, and text, including about 100 "dynamic" pages which will be updated regularly to reflect changing variables. These "dynamic" pages will not be created until software is completed to allow remote updating. In the interim, priority is being given to creation of 150 "static" pages, which have already been made available to the DOC demonstration data base and the Bell Vista data base. Pages are being made available to other field trial operators as soon as they can be reproduced. The task force is providing a number of customized pages containing information tailored to the regions where field trials are being conducted.

The task force is creating the following information packages:

Quiz: A quiz format package displaying different types of information available from Statistics Canada and ways in which the information can be used.

Leading Economic Indicators: Tables, text and graphics reflecting key economic indicators.



Consumer Price Index: Eight pages showing national and appropriate local consumer price trends.

Today's Economy: National and local information on gross national product, merchandise trade balance and the labour force.

Map of Census Data: Local data from the 1976 Census displayed with maps appropriate to the area served by individual field trials.

Fast Facts on Canadians: Facts about population, families, health, education, work, leisure, crime and justice, environment and energy use.

Energy in the Home: Sixteen pages showing sources, uses and consumption of different types of energy used in Canadian homes.

Statistics Canada at Your Service: A feature explaining and listing information available from Statistics Canada and showing how to obtain it.

June 3 is Census Day: A special feature explaining the national census to be conducted this year.

Statistics Canada's involvement with Telidon began early in 1980 with a Telidon pilot project in conjunction with Carleton University and the TVOntario trials. An organizational study of Statistics Canada by Price Waterhouse Associates recommended in February, 1980 that Statistics Canada should "take the initiative in providing information for distribution through new communications media such as Telidon."

"Publications are likely to become less and less important as a means of disseminating statistics," Price Waterhouse noted.

"Major users in the economic forecasting field rely heavily on the CANSIM data base in building models and developing forecasts. The Telidon system ... could be an ideal medium for disseminating statistics to households and medium sized businesses who only use such information occasionally." Statistics Canada regional offices now receive in excess of 160,000 requests for information per year.

For more information about the Statistics Canada Telidon task force, contact: Ellis Drover, Director of User Service, Statistics Canada, R.H. Coats Building, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ont., K1A 0T6, (613) 996-0153.

#### TELIDON TRIAL IN NOVA SCOTIA

Maritime Telephone and Telegraph Co. Ltd. has announced plans to conduct a Telidon field trial in Nova Scotia early in 1982. Details on the location, number of terminals and type of trial will be announced later this year.

For more information contact: Denis Connor, Maritime Telephone and Telegraph Co. Ltd., Maritime Centre, PO Box 880, Halifax, N.S., B3J 2W3. (902) 421-5855.

#### INTERDISCOM AND TELIDON

(Editor's note: This is the second in a continuing series of profiles of companies which helped develop different aspects of the Telidon system.)

Interdiscom Systems Limited is a Winnipeg-based engineering firm specializing in telecommunications research and product development. The company engineers, produces and installs digital systems and develops software and firmware for microcomputer- and



microprocessor-based systems. Interdiscom played a major role in all aspects of software and firmware development for Project Ida, the multi-service Telidon trial sponsored by the Manitoba Telephone System in South Headingley near Winnipeg. The company designed and installed Omnitel II, the distribution and switching system which allows videotex, pay television, remote metering and alarm service to be routed to homes in the field trial. The company developed a system of remote network nodes outside the users' homes to test pay television control techniques and provide Telidon and other services on a shared basis at less cost than individual terminal installation would have incurred. For more information contact: Dr. Norman Toms, Vice President, Interdiscom Systems Ltd., 87-1313 Border St., Winnipeg, Man. R3H 0X4 (204) 632-1436.

#### COMPETING SYSTEMS ON DISPLAY

As many as 40 manufacturers of videotex equipment are expected to display their wares at Videotex '81, the international symposium to be held at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto May 20-22. The conference, which will deal with a broad range of international videotex developments, will be divided into three concurrent streams of sessions. The International Review stream will provide an overview of what is happening in videotex around the world. The General and Business Interest stream will consider various general issues as well as the current status and potential business uses of videotex. The Industry stream will deal in detail with specific topics of interest to those already actively involved with videotex. Some 90 speakers have been booked for the conference.

Conference organizers report that Britain's Prestel and France's Antiope systems will be on show during the conference, and several different types of Telidon equipment will also be displayed. Also represented at the conference will be Viewdata Corporation of America, Telemart International, Apple Canada, Electrohome, Norpak, TVOntario, Infomart and the Bell group. Videotex '81 will be preceded on May 19 by a meeting of the International Videotex Information Providers Association (IVIPA), which represents information providers groups from several countries. This will be the first time IVIPA has convened in Canada. Guest speaker will be Brian Botten of Fintel, London, U.K. For more information, contact: Rosanne Lee, Videotex '81, 316 Lonsdale Rd., Suite 3, Toronto, Ont. M4V 1X4, (416) 598-1981.

#### TÉLÉCABLE VIDÉOTRON UPDATE

Télécabl Vidéotron Ltée. plans to start the first phase of its multi-function Home Information System (HIS) in the Montreal area this November. The cable company, which serves 95,000 subscribers, is the main participant in a \$4.5 million project to test teletext, videotex and other interactive services during the next three years. Other participants include the Montreal newspaper La Presse, the University of Quebec, Hydro Québec and the École Polytechnique de Montréal. The federal Department of Communications and the Department of Supply and Services are contributing \$1.2 million to the trials.

Télécabl Vidéotron will introduce its new services in three phases:

Phase 1: Scheduled for November, will introduce one-way teletext and other broadcast-based information services.



Phase 2: Planned for January, 1982, will introduce the selective mode, making it possible to transmit specific types of information to selected interest groups. Phase 2 will allow narrowcasting of teletext to specific users, transmission of microcomputer software and remote selection of service options, particularly pay television.

Phase 3: Later in 1982, will introduce a full range of videotex and other interactive services, including remote alarm monitoring and metering. Two-way cable communications devices will be installed to permit interactive service to individual homes. Subscriber interface equipment will be developed in modular form to accommodate new services as they become available.

In addition to the HIS project, Télécable Vidéotron is working on a special trial called Telidon II, which is aimed at establishing Telidon database structures that are flexible and accessible by key words.

The purpose of the Télécable Vidéotron project is to develop home terminal equipment and computer connection techniques that will make it possible to deliver hundreds of channels of information and special services on cable systems currently delivering 35 conventional television channels.

Two computers were installed in January for the Télécable Vidéotron trials. A DEC PDP 11/70 computer is being used by the Telidon II development group while the HIS group is using a DEC 11/34 minicomputer. The two computers are linked by high speed data bus. Initial plans call for the use of 250 Telidon user terminals.

Canadian Cable Systems Ltd. of Toronto is also involved in the Télécable Vidéotron projects and the two companies plan to share any new technology developed in the trials.

For more information about the Télécable Vidéotron trials: Michel Dufresne, Director of Research, Télécable Vidéotron Ltée., 90 Beaubien Street West, 6th floor, Montréal, Québec, H2S 1V7 (514) 270-6031.

#### AEL MICROTREL SELLS 1,000 TERMINALS

AEL Microtel Ltd. of Vancouver has signed a contract with Infomart of Toronto to produce 1,000 Telidon business user terminals with keyboards. The contract is valued at more than \$2 million Canadian and delivery is scheduled for January, 1982. AEL Microtel, a subsidiary of B.C. Tel, is Canada's second largest manufacturer of telecommunications equipment.

Microtel was formed in October, 1979 as a wholly-owned subsidiary of British Columbia Telephone Company through the purchase and merging of two successful companies, switching and subscriber equipment manufacturer GTE Automatic Electric (Canada) Ltd., and transmission equipment manufacturer GTE Lenkurt Electric (Canada) Ltd.

Microtel established its research and development arm, Microtel Pacific Research Ltd., by merging the research and development organizations of the two previous companies.

In January, 1980, Dr. John C. Madden, then Director-General, Special Research Programs, for the Department of Communications in Ottawa, returned to industry and his home province of B.C.



as President of Microtel Pacific Research. He established a group dedicated to Telidon development.

Assisted by a technology transfer agreement with Norpak Ltd., of Pakenham, Ontario, and by the co-operative approach adopted by DOC, Microtel Pacific was able to develop a fully-integrated terminal featuring a Telidon decoder encased in a customized cabinet with a 13-inch colour monitor, keyboard or optional hand-held alphanumeric keypad.

Last year, Microtel created a Business Information Systems Group which has responsibility for marketing Microtel Telidon terminals nationally and internationally.

The 1,000 terminals sold to Infomart will be produced by Viscount Industries Ltd., a Vancouver electronics firm which was acquired by Microtel as a wholly-owned subsidiary in 1980.

For more information about Microtel Pacific and Telidon, contact: S.T. Chapman, Microtel Pacific Research, 7018 Lougheed Highway, Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1W3 (604) 291-7833.

#### AGT FIELD TRIAL STATUS REPORT

J.D. McDonald, general supervisor of market research, planning and development for Alberta Government Telephones, reports that preliminary installation of equipment for the AGT-Telidon trial is complete and about 2,000 pages of content should be ready when the trial commences July 1.

A PDP 11/70 host computer has been installed on the fourteenth floor of the Len Werry Building in Calgary and 12 public access, four demonstration and four 3101 ports are in service. Four information provider system terminals and two videotex overlay camera systems are in operation and 30 Mark II Norpak Telidon User terminals are in service or ready for installation. Operators have loaded the latest version of Communications Research Centre software and three levels of information tree structure have been designed and accepted by the information provider community.

A minimum of 2,000 pages will be loaded on the computer by July 1 and at least 2,400 more will be ready by September 1, 1981, McDonald reports. The target dates for commencement and termination of the trial are July 1, 1981 and January 1, 1982 respectively. For more information about the AGT trial, contact:  
J.D. McDonald, Alberta Government Telephones, P.O. Box 2411, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2S4 (403) 425-4336.



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